

Challenging Behaviors—Challenging
Lives

The Relationship Between Early
Experiences and Behavior

Laurie Prusso
Consultant and Trainer

www.TeacherLaurie.com

10/19/16

LauriePrusso@gmail.com
TeacherLaurie.com

peace

*If we want to bring about
peace, we will have to begin
with the people who teach the
children.*

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Ready to Learn

- Security
- Trust
- Connection
- Contribution
- Capability
- Friendship
- Learning
- Emotional Regulation
- Social Skills



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TeacherLaurie.com

Emotional Development 101

- Children's emotional development is the product of a dance of interaction between biological maturation and the experiences they have had.

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Why kids misbehave

- Some neurological issues
- Pre-natal exposure to drugs, alcohol, and other teratogens, or toxins
- Chaotic environments
- Abuse, neglect, harsh punishment, aggressive adults-- **ACES**
 - Developmentally INAPPROPRIATE Expectations

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Situational factors

- Hungry
- Tired
- Anxious/Excited/Worried
- Sick
- Dealing with transitions
- Developing Bad Habits

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Name some of the behaviors we consider challenging

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Challenges

Screaming	Not eating food
Talking back	Not taking turns
Ignoring us	Taking things
Putting off tasks	Lying
Not listening	Kicking
Tantrums	Biting
Hitting	Throwing things
Not sharing (selfish)	Whining

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Development

- The influence of development in children's behavior cannot be underestimated.
- Most behaviors that we consider "challenging" are simply age typical and are constrained by immaturity and lack of skills and impulse control.

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When children Struggle

Their behaviors are exaggerated and or extend beyond the typical developmental timelines that we would expect.

They should not be punished for their lack of knowledge, skill and ability !

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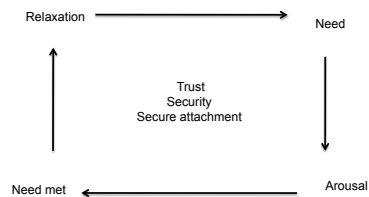
Attachment matters:

- ✓ Attuned
- ✓ Responsive
- ✓ Coherent
- ✓ Consistent

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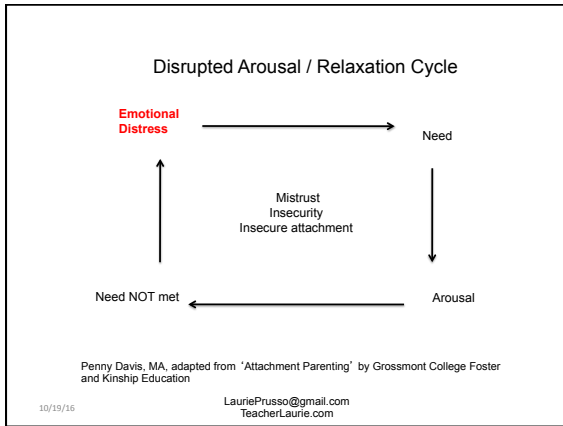
Arousal / Relaxation Cycle

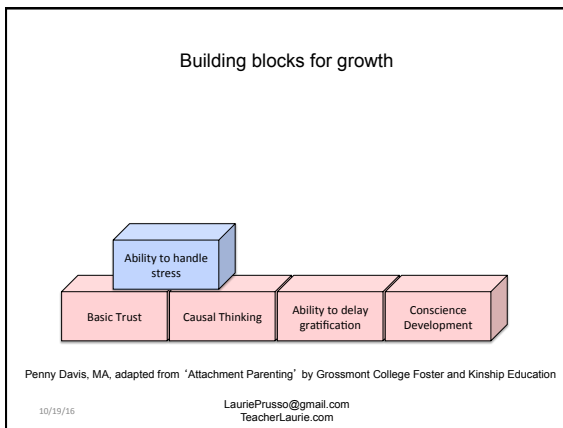


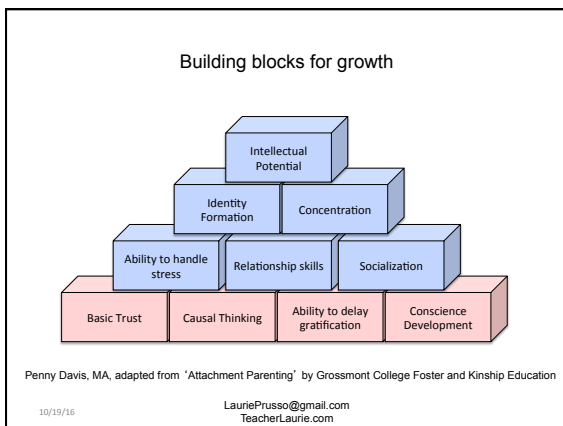
Penny Davis, MA, adapted from "Attachment Parenting" by Grossmont College Foster and Kinship Education

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Types of Attachment

- Secure – 60-70% of the population
- Insecure – 30-40% of the population
 - Avoidant
 - Ambivalent
 - Chaotic

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ACES Predict


DELAY IN ABILITY TO SELF-REGULATE	Behaviors that look like ADD and ADHD
DEVELOPMENT MAY BE DELAYED	LACK OF CONFIDENCE
MEMORY PROBLEMS	NIGHTMARES/SLEEP ISSUES
EXCESSIVE TEMPER ISSUES	STOMACHACHES/HEADACHES
ATTEMPTS TO FEEL CONNECTEDS	SELF-BLAME
AGGRESSION	PROBLEMS ATTENDING/FOCUSING
AFRAID OF ADULTS	IMITATION OF TRAUMATIC EVENT
ANXIETY	VERBALLY AGGRESSIVE
GENERAL SADNESS	SCREAM OR CRY A LOT
WITHDRAWAL	AVOIDANT/ DON'T DO COOPERATIVE PLAY EASILY

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LauriePrusso@gmail.com
TeacherLaurie.com

The Stress Response

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TeacherLaurie.com

Hyper-vigilance and The Brain in the Palm of the Hand



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TeacherLaurie.com

Outward Behaviors

- Explosive
- Volatile
- Angry
- Anxious
- Unpredictable
- Intense
- Erratic




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Effects on behavior and learning

Because the Stress Response directly effects the brain and the development of memory, children who experience adversity at an early age are more likely to exhibit **deficits in executive functioning**, suggesting that these capacities are vulnerable to disruption early in the developmental process.

Behavior related to self-regulation is especially effected.



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What about learning?

- 60% available
- Not interested!
- Confused, hurt (angry), hyper-vigilant, worried
- Reactive
- Don't work well in classroom environments where teachers are demanding, demeaning, discouraging and disrespectful.
- By the time we get these folks, they have lived a life time in a world of sorrow and pain!

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TeacherLaurie.com

Human Beings Are Always Seeking Connection

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Belonging | • Significance |
| • Personal Power | • Integrity and self-expression |
| • Capability | • Courage |

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Misbehavior is

- An attempt to meet a real human need in a way that does not work well and is met with resistance or rejection.
- The need is for belonging and significance —a sense of connection
- Our job is to help children learn effective and appropriate ways to meet their needs and get along with us and others as they grow.
- That is what *Discipline* is all about.

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Effective Relationships

Strengthen a sense of belonging and significance, connecting the child with a caring adult.

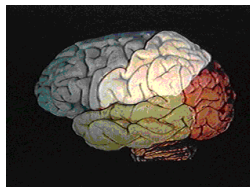
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When we focus on supporting the belonging and significance of the child, we strengthen the child's sense of connection and our relationship with the child; in response, he/she will be able to "do better."

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Reptile, Mammal or Human

- The Three Part Brain
 - Survival
 - Emotion
 - Thinking



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Traumatic Life

When children(and adults as children) have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences, they have a powerful, overwhelming sense of loss, sorrow, sadness, fear, pain, and confusion.

Unfortunately, their behavior often looks like anger or distraction.

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TeacherLaurie.com

Behavior is Like an Iceberg



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Avoid Re-traumatization

- Every adult is respectful every time!
- Teachers see their role as supporting and being as effective as possible in teaching ALL children
- Teachers recognize that they ARE that ONE caring adult that will enhance a child's resilience
- Administrators understand Trauma and provide supports for teachers and staff in meeting the needs of children
- Effective Discipline Replaces Behaviorism
- Non-punitive, effective problem solving is used to support a caring learning culture

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TeacherLaurie.com

Brainstorm among yourselves

Typical classroom and school responses



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TeacherLaurie.com

Typical school responses

- Time out
 - Lose recess
 - Detention
 - No "FUN" activities (Friday fun-day, etc.)
 - Threats
 - Notes home
 - ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES!
 - Humiliation in front of class– Pulling cards, withholding stickers (using stickers) s
- All of these things hurt them more!
We RE-TRAUMATIZE THEM

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Re-traumatization

- Typical "Discipline" policies and practices re-traumatize already fragile children
- Humiliation and embarrassment invited by pulling cards, calling out names, shaming and blaming support and strengthen the existing hyper-vigilant neuro-pathway for aggression
- Discouraged and hurt children are not full participants in the learning environment
- The cycle of discouragement predicts for worse outcomes

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AVOID PUNISHMENT!

- Replace Punishment and Punitive Consequences with Positive Discipline
- Be kind, patient, and compassionate in ALL interactions because that is what you want the children to learn
- Recognize your OWN behaviors

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The child is asking:
"What do I need
to be able to do
next time?"

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Effective Relationships

Respect the need for personal dignity, respect and power.

Adults avoid threatening these essential needs and provide opportunities for the child to develop an internalized sense of dignity and worth, mutual respect and appropriate power and courage.

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Effective Relationships

Are focused on long-term solutions and learning

- NO MORE punishment and no "consequences", rather working together to create solutions

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Effective Relationships

- Enhance capability and learning and help children become increasingly capable over time.

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- The type and strength of a child's Attachment will influence the expression of emotional self-regulation early on.
- Caregivers RESPONSES to a child's abilities will continue to influence the development of emotional self-regulation.

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We do not help
children do better by
making them feel
badly about
themselves!

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ENCOURAGEMENT

When a child is full of courage, it is
likely that he/she will do well and
behave well.

Discouragement breeds problems.

Learn to InCourage your children.

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Work With the Brain

Do things that use what we
Know about neuroscience!



- Listening Instead of Talking
- Brain Works

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Peace

*If we want to bring about
peace, we will have to begin
with the people who teach the
children.*

Laurie

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Thank you for attending

- Please find more information at

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10/19/16 LauriePrusso@gmail.com
TeacherLaurie.com

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- Laurie is a retired Professor of Child Development and is focused on emotional and social development in young children and adult-child relationships. She is specifically interested in and has done extensive work in the area of the effects of trauma on children and families and the role of relationships in healing.
- Laurie has provided consulting services, workshops, trainings and keynote addresses around the state. She earned her BA in Human Development and a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood from California State University. She is a Certified Positive Discipline © Trainer and Parent Educator and presents workshops and trainings.
- In addition to her professional career, Laurie is the mother of six grown children, all boys. Her blended family includes 13 children (11 sons!) and 43+ grandchildren. She is learning to play the Ukulele.

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TeacherLaurie.com

Sound Discipline works with whole schools to improve all relationships. Our experience is that the students who struggle the most with misbehavior have been exposed to trauma. Our 3 hour workshop, Strategies for Working with Students Exposed to Trauma is offered to the public several times a year, or you can schedule your own by contacting us. info@SoundDiscipline.org

VIDEOS From *Sound Discipline*

- **Building Classroom Community: Class Meetings and Self-Regulation** This 40 minute video (in two sections) shows a class meeting and students discussing the skills they have and use to build their classroom community.
- **Building Resiliency: Working with Students Exposed to Trauma** This 2.25 hour video is a recording of a presentation done by Dr. McVittie. It starts with the brain science behind trauma and attachment and offers practical approaches and tools for supporting all students, especially those exposed to stress and/or trauma.
- Both are available from Sound Discipline. To order, email info@SoundDiscipline.org

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TeacherLaurie.com

ACEs Resources

- <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
- <http://www.centerforyouthwellness.org/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>
- <http://acestoohigh.com/2012/10/03/the-adverse-childhood-experiences-study-the-largest-most-important-public-health-study-you-never-heard-of-began-in-an-obesity-clinic/>
- <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/>
- <http://psycheducation.org/brain-tours/3-brains-in-one-brain/>

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TeacherLaurie.com

Additional resources

- Clervil, R. and DeCandia, C. (2013). Integrating and sustaining trauma-informed care across diverse service systems. Retrieved from www.tapartnership.org/docs/TraumainformedSOCBrief_092713.pdf. National Indian Child Welfare Association • 5100 SW Macadam, Suite 300, Portland, OR 97239 • (503) 222-4044 • www.nicwa.org
- <http://www.positivediscipline.org/>

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TeacherLaurie.com

Why Positive Discipline?

- Positive Discipline is grounded in what the adult does, rather than on what the child did.
- It requires adults to be intentional, knowledgeable, and wise.
- It has the best and long term interest of the child in mind.
- It is proven effective.
- It strengthens relationships and a sense of belonging and significance.

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Invite Cooperation

Support contingent
relationships and
coherent stories to
help children make
sense of life.

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Create Caring Communities of Learners

- Using class meetings to connect children to each other
- To teach emotional skills and effective communication.
- To create safety and security
- This is the key to learning.

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LauriePrusso@gmail.com
TeacherLaurie.com

Every Student Needs

- To know that someone cares
- Someone to talk to
- To feel safe
- To make meaningful contributions
- To feel successful
- To make progress

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LauriePrusso@gmail.com
TeacherLaurie.com
